Prasar Bharati is a national entity. Its responsibilites are defined under Section 12 of the Act and these keep in view the requirements of the country as a whole.

Performance of DD News Channel

2198. SHRI S. PETER ALPHONSE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that DD News, the 24 hours satellite news channel, has not been performing well and all set for a quiet close down;

(b) whether any official survey has indicated that the viewers average is very low as compared to Aaj Tak, Star News and BBC; and

(c) whether the top 10 producers of commissioned programmes on the channel received several crores of money for making programmes which had very poor viewership?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) and (c) As part of Doordarshan restructuring, Prasar Bharati Board has, in principle, taken a decision to close down Doordarshan News and Current Affairs Channel due to its high cost and low visibility. The Board also decided that Doordarshan National Channel, which has the highest reach covering over 70% of the population, will carry more programmes on news and current affairs to fulfil the mandate of public service broadcasting more effectively.

(b) No official survey has been conducted on performance of DD News Channel. However, viewership figures received from TAM Media Research for 27 cities shows that DD News has low viewership in comparison to Aaj Tak, Zee, Star News and BBC.

Issue of notices to advertising agencies for clearance of dues

2199. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prasar Bharati has recently issued legal notice to a large number of advertising agencies for recovery of about Rs. 85 crores;

(b) if so, the details of the amount due from these agencies, agency-wise;